



# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

## news release

Fish and Wildlife Service

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### RECORD AMOUNT SPENT ON WETLAND CONSERVATION UNDER NORTH AMERICAN WATERFOWL PLAN

Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan announced today that a partnership of more than 200 conservation groups, businesses, individuals, states and the U.S. Government spent a record \$118 million in 1990 in the United States conserving wetlands in an international effort to improve the environment.

The partnership aims to conserve more than 6 million acres of wetlands in the United States, Canada, and Mexico by the year 2000. Eventual cost of the habitat conservation program alone is estimated at \$1.5 billion.

"We have come a long way in this huge environmental effort," Lujan said. "The task ahead is formidable, but I am heartened by the spirit and determination of the alliance of interests cooperating under the banner of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan."

Total U.S. private and government expenditures for the Plan amounted to nearly \$200 million from 1986 through 1990. Expectations are that money for the Plan from U.S. sources will exceed \$90 million in 1991.

Important Federal sources of funds include more than \$32 million approved under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act of 1989 for projects through July 1991. That money was supplemented by nearly \$57 million from Plan partners such as states, provinces, and conservation groups. Act funds, distributed under terms of that legislation, provided about 50 percent each to the United States and Canada and less than 1 percent to Mexico. Implementation of the Plan is just beginning in Mexico.

Through 1990, Plan activities in the United States have resulted in the protection, restoration, or enhancement of more than one million acres of wetlands such as ponds, lakes, and marshes. Additional conservation of more than 300,000 acres is expected by the end of 1991.

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Recent projects include \$11.4 million for protection and enhancement for the 64,000-acre ACE Basin Project of South Carolina, in the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture, and \$3 million for enhancement of 12,000 acres of private lands in the Chase Lake Project of North Dakota, part of the Prairie Pothole Joint Venture.

A total of \$17.3 million has been spent for protection of 24,000 acres, restoration of 3,500 acres, and enhancement of 78,000 acres in the San Joaquin Basin Project of California, which is in the Central Valley Joint Venture. Joint ventures are umbrella organizations usually covering several states or provinces which oversee projects ranging from a few hundred to thousands of acres.

In Canada, major efforts were directed toward the Prairie Habitat Joint Venture where about \$25 million from Canadian and U.S. sources was spent on habitat protection, restoration, and management of key waterfowl nesting areas from the start of the Plan through 1990. Private and government sources in Canada provided more than \$30 million for Plan work through 1990.

"The scope of the North American Plan is so enormous it would never have succeeded without international cooperation," observed John F. Turner, Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "The benefits will be felt throughout the continent in such diverse ways as improving flood control and restoring habitat for birds and other wildlife."

Conservation organizations contributing to the Plan include Ducks Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy, the National Wildlife Federation, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and the Wildlife Management Institute.

Corporations assisting the Plan with cash or activities such as practicing wetland conservation on their lands include the Dow Chemical Company, the Scott Paper Company, the Orvis Company, and the Phillips Petroleum Company. Many farmers, ranchers, and other individual property owners also have made substantial improvements for wetlands.

"About 75 percent of the remaining wetlands in this country is in private hands," explained Harvey K. Nelson, Executive Director of the North American Waterfowl and Wetlands Office, coordinator of Plan activities under the Fish and Wildlife Service. "Fortunately, private landowners and other partners are pitching in with enormous enthusiasm, and we can't help but think that the Plan will succeed."